

# **Introductory Discussion on the Inclusion of Subject Matter Programs in the Commission's Accreditation System August 2009**

## **Overview of this Report**

This agenda item describes the current initial review process for subject matter programs and begins the discussion of how subject matter programs might be included in the Commission's accreditation system.

## **Staff Recommendation**

This is an information item only.

## **Background**

Since the Ryan Act of 1970 (Chap. 557, Stats. 1970), the Education Code has provided two routes for individuals to satisfy the subject matter requirement (§ 44310). The Ryan Act instituted a requirement that all candidates for a Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credential pass a subject matter examination. However, the legislation also provided for an alternative to the subject matter examination requirement. This option authorized colleges and universities to design and implement subject matter programs approved by the Commission that would "waive" the examination by providing a coursework route to establishing subject matter competence. (In addition, each candidate was/is required to complete an approved professional teacher preparation [pedagogy] program.) At this point in time, a subject matter program is reviewed for initial approval and remains approved until the standards are revised. The standards for subject matter programs are reviewed and revised approximately every 10 years.

Over the years, Commission policies have directed that the two routes ensure equivalent content knowledge of individuals preparing to become teachers and that the content is closely related to the curriculum of the public schools. When the Commission developed subject matter program standards and its own subject matter examinations in the early 1990s, the two routes were brought into even closer alignment by using one set of subject matter requirements (SMRs) for the development of both the examination and the program standards. Also, as a part of the program standards, the Commission included some standards that addressed program qualities beyond the subject matter content that were recommended by the subject matter advisory panels. Later, SB 2042 (Chap. 548, Stats. 1998) required that both the examination and the program routes be aligned to the K-12 student academic content standards.

Typically subject matter preparation occurs during a candidate's undergraduate coursework. To satisfy the subject matter requirement, an individual may elect to complete a course of study as part of the bachelor's degree that meets the Commission's subject matter requirements or an individual may complete a bachelor's degree in any subject, take and pass the appropriate subject matter examination. Some argue that completing an approved subject matter program as compared to passing the subject matter examination ensures a greater level of knowledge and understanding in that subject matter for an individual who wishes to become a teacher. A rationale for this point of view stems from concerns that it might be possible that an individual who is good at taking tests could pass the appropriate subject matter examination but not have a rich and deep understanding of the particular subject matter.

Colleges and universities that intend to offer subject matter preparation to undergraduate students through Commission-approved programs must meet the adopted subject matter standards in order to be approved by the Commission for this purpose. Because of NCLB requirements, since 2004, candidates for a multiple subject credential do not have the program option to meet the subject matter requirement but must take and pass the subject matter examination (currently the California Subject Examinations for Teachers - CSET: Multiple Subjects). An approved single subject matter program is viewed as equivalent to a college major by NCLB. Therefore, at this time, the completion of an approved subject matter program in lieu of a subject matter exam is only available for the single subject credential.

To meet the adopted subject matter standards, colleges and universities submit a subject matter program document for review by expert subject matter panels. These panels review all program documentation and make an informed determination as to whether the program meets the standards common to all subject matter programs and the subject-specific subject matter standards. Once the review panel has determined that a single subject matter program proposal meets the adopted standards, the Commission receives the recommendation to approve the single subject matter program. Once the subject matter programs are integrated into the Commission's accreditation system, the recommendations for approval would come to the Committee on Accreditation rather than the Commission.

### **Overview of the Subject Matter Program Review Procedures**

Following are the current general procedures for the review of subject matter programs:

1. Technical Assistance – After the Commission adopts a set of new program standards, Commission staff members provide technical assistance to prospective program sponsors wishing to submit responses to the new standards. Technical assistance materials are provided on the Commission's website. Staff members train, assign, and coordinate review team work.
2. Preconditions Review – After the program proposal is received, Commission staff review the sponsor's response to the preconditions. The preconditions are based on both state laws and Commission policies, and address minimum unit and content area requirements. If the preconditions response is incomplete, the sponsor is requested to provide specific information necessary for compliance with the preconditions.
3. Program Review – The program sponsor's responses to the Commission's subject matter program standards are reviewed by a team of two or more subject matter educators to determine if the program meets the program standards, including the subject matter requirements (SMRs). The SMRs are the content knowledge required to be covered in the program and are aligned to the K-12 content standards that the candidate will be expected to know. The reviewers are trained in the alignment of the standards and subject matter requirements and in the review process before they are assigned proposals to review. Reviewers are instructed to find explicit evidence that programs not only align with K-12 content standards but also introduce their candidates to those standards within the context of their subject matter studies. The team must reach consensus that each

standard and required element is met based upon evidence provided in the document. If the program does not meet the standards, the sponsor is given an explanation of the findings. The sponsor may then submit the additional information requested. Once reviewers determine that the program proposal provides a convincing and adequate body of evidence to meet the Commission's adopted subject matter program standards, the program is recommended to the Commission for approval. At this time the agenda items for approval of subject matter programs are contained in the Commission's Consent Agenda.

4. After subject matter program approval is granted by the Commission, the institution may accept candidates in the approved subject matter program. Graduates of a Commission approved single subject matter preparation program meet the Commission's subject matter requirement and are not required to take the subject matter examination (CSET).

Subject matter programs are typically housed in Colleges of Arts and Sciences, not the School or College of Education. The internal institutional program development and review process itself prior to submission of the program to the Commission for review can be lengthy and complex. Apart from establishing the curriculum for the program, institutions face additional challenges in developing proposed subject matter programs because of the need to coordinate faculty outside of the School or College of Education in an activity that is voluntary. Yet, institutions submit the prospective subject matter programs in large measure because of the belief that subject matter programs aligned to the K-12 content standards prepare prospective teachers effectively in their content knowledge.

### **Transition from Prior Subject Matter Standards to SB 2042 Standards**

It seems possible that the very detailed nature of the current review process for subject matter programs may be precluding some institutions from submitting a subject matter program. Approval for the pre-SB 2042 subject matter programs has expired for four content areas and within the next three years for the remainder of the content areas. In fact at this time, no new candidates may begin a subject matter program unless it has been approved under the SB 2042 program standards as is shown in the table below.

Phase	Content Areas	Last date to for a candidate to	
		begin a non-SB 2042 program	complete a non-SB 2042 program
I	English, mathematics, science, and social science	July 1, 2005	July 1, 2009
II	Art, music, languages other than English, and physical education	July 1, 2006	July 1, 2010
III	Agriculture, business, health science, home economics, and industrial and technology education	July 1, 2008	July 1, 2012

The total number of approved subject matter programs that were in operation under the prior standards as well as the number of programs approved under the SB 2042 standards is shown below. Clearly, at this time there are fewer approved programs than there were under the prior

standards. For the multiple subject programs, there are 39 programs instead of the 64 that were previously approved. This decrease is most likely due to the fact that since July 2004 the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law has required all individuals seeking to earn a multiple subject teaching credential to pass an examination.

<b>Number of Approved Subject Matter Programs</b>								
	<b>Prior Standards</b>				<b>SB 2042 Standards</b>			
	CSU	Private	UC	<b>Total</b>	CSU	Private	UC	<b>Total</b>
Multiple Subject Subject Matter Programs	21	40	3	<b>64</b>	12	24	3	<b>39</b>
Single Subject Subject Matter Programs	194	118	43	<b>355</b>	81	31	9	<b>121</b>

Provided below is information on the content areas for the currently approved single subject matter programs. Currently there are 160 approved programs – significantly less than the 419 previously approved subject matter programs.

<b>SB 2042 Single Subject Subject Matter Programs by Content Area</b>					
<b>Content Area</b>		<b>CSU</b>	<b>UC</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Phase I</b>	English	12	2	7	<b>21</b>
	Mathematics	19	10	2	<b>31</b>
	Science: Biology	2	2	0	<b>4</b>
	Science: Chemistry	3	3	0	<b>5</b>
	Science: Geoscience	3	1	0	<b>4</b>
	Science: Physics	3	1	0	<b>4</b>
	General Science	2	2	0	<b>4</b>
	Social Science	10	3	0	<b>13</b>
<b>Phase II</b>	Art	4	4	0	<b>8</b>
	Languages other than English	10	1	0	<b>11</b>
	Music	4	1	0	<b>5</b>
	Physical Education	8	1	0	<b>9</b>
<b>Phase III</b>	Agriculture	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Business	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Home Economics	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Health Science	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Industrial & Technology Education	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Programs</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>121</b>

### **Integration of Subject Matter Programs into the Commission's Accreditation System**

At its July-August 2006 meeting the Commission took action stating its intention that all programs leading to a credential should participate in the Commission's accreditation system.

*Topic 6: Establish consistency in the system by including all Credential and Certificate Programs in the Accreditation Process*

*Preferred Option:* Adopt the general principle that all programs that lead to a credential or certificate in California should be reviewed on a periodic basis and that the review process should be implemented in a manner that recognizes program differences but maintains comparable rigor across program types.  
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2006-08/2006-08-6B.pdf>

At the September 2006 Commission meeting two of the types of programs that had not previously participated in the accreditation system were integrated into the system: LEA sponsored Designated Subjects programs and Guidelines-based Administrative Services Credential programs. In addition, the certificate programs and other programs that were not previously in the accreditation system (e.g. CLAD and Clear Credential) were moved into the accreditation system. Action at the January 2009 Committee on Accreditation meeting began the transition of Induction programs into the accreditation system. Therefore approved subject matter programs are the only programs leading to an authorization that the Commission is responsible for which are not now participating in its accreditation system.

The Commission's accreditation system incorporates multiple activities:

- On going data collection and analysis
- Biennial Reporting
- Program Assessment
- Site visit every seventh year

In the discussions about including the subject matter programs into accreditation, the Accreditation Study Work Group and the Committee on Accreditation, during their meetings on the revised accreditation system, discussed at length the need to consider a modification of the activities for the subject matter programs. In other words, there was agreement that the subject matter programs needed to be transitioned into the accreditation system, however, a recognition that their participation in all activities related to educator preparation programs may not be necessary. While ideas were raised, the issue of how the subject matter programs would be incorporated was left unresolved until after the revised accreditation system was begun being implemented.

In keeping with the previous discussions, staff is not proposing that the subject matter programs would participate in all of the accreditation system's activities. However, further discussion is needed to determine exactly in what manner the programs should be included in the accreditation system. Questions for the committee to discuss include the following:

- 1) In which of the Commission's accreditation activities would it be most appropriate for subject matter programs to participate?
- 2) What additional information would the COA like to have as it considers how to integrate approved subject matter programs into the accreditation system?
- 3) Would the COA like staff to bring together representatives from approved subject matter programs (or the institutions that offer approved subject matter programs) as an advisory group or to participate in a conversation with the COA at a future meeting?

### **Next Steps**

Based on the COA's discussion, staff will develop a proposal for the committee to review and discuss at its October 2009 meeting.